Report on my expedition to the Kinabalu Mt.

C.A. Fenton 1932

I h. beh. to report that, out of the 44 days (march 12 - April 25) that I was away from Singapore, I was able to spend 22 days & in the company of the Clemens's party. I was able to save some days & expense by travelling on foot across a direct, but more difficult, route from Tuaran to Tenompok.

The Resident at Jesselton & the District Officer at Tuaran were extremely kind to supply me all the necessary information about the travels in that part of Borneo & to arrange for coolies for the transport of my luggage to Tenompok. During the inward trip I had the assistance of the Penghulu General of the Tuaran District, who acted for me as a guide & interpreter & whose services were lent to me by the District Officer of Tuaran. The Surveyor-General at Jesselton gave all facilities at his disposal so that I may be able to interpret better the results of my observations on the vegetation on the Kinabalu ridge & in the yet unexplored intervening Dachang region to the east of Kinabalu ridge.

Most of my time was spent in ~~searching~~ searching [illegible] & areas between the altitudes of 2000 to 13,000 ft. (including the six days I spent in the Interior Dachang region).

The trip to the Interior Dachang region occupied six days. Apparently no botanical collector has been there before. The trip suggested the possibility of ascending the mountain ridge to the northern side of Lewis Gully by this route — an yet unexplored ridge as far

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as botany is concerned. The ascent to Bukit Dadang (which Mr. Clemens estimates to be about 3,000 ft. high) is much less tiresome than the ascent to the Paka cave.

Most of my time was spent in searching palms & aroids between the altitudes of 3000-4,500 ft. I also spent some time in sorting out the specimens which the Clemens's Party have accumulated at Semongok & also in training their men to make & dry specimens of palms & aroids.

Aroids are found in low wet regions along the banks of rivers & in wet areas left uncultivated by the Dusun people. The mountains do not seem to be very rich in the aroid species, though I have found three or four which were not recorded before for those regions.

Palms with erect stems are extremely rare in the regions above 3,500 ft. I noticed only three such species, all of which belong to the genus Pinanga. One of these appear to be a new species. I was able to note only two stemless palms, one of which is a Salacca species & the other may be a Daemonorops (not recorded in Miss Gibbs' paper). (Mr. Neal informed me that some different kinds of aroids & some palms belonging to the Arenga group existed at an alt of not more than 7,000 ft in the Merintindok region — which information I passed on to Mr. Clemens to see if he could arrange to send men that side) climbing palms with a stem of 25 ft or more were practically absent below 6000 & 7000 ft. I only saw one specimen of Kunstleria in the Tampasuk valley below Dallas*, but this was without flowers or fruits. Scandent palms with coarse stems of

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about 8 to 12 feet in length were common in these lower regions, but all belonged to about 7 species. The absence, by scarcity, of palms would exist palms may be easily explained by the fact that these palms are not adapted to colder regions, but for the scarcity of the scandent palms in these regions, especially suited for lianas greater in variation probable is probable due to the methods of their exploitation by the Dusuns to whom these palms are of a great value, since they supply them material for their ropes, baskets, traps, hats, a part of woman's apparels, etc. These palms take several years before they can produce flowers & fruits, so that, when cut indiscriminately without any regard to their age & maturity, they tend to get exterminated. The fact that, only in the less accessible higher regions in such higher regions which are also less accessible to the Dusuns that these long stemmed scandent palms are found in any appreciable extent, & that in the low & in the more accessible regions only the coarser climbing palms which are practically of no value to the Dusuns are seen to fairly often seem to support this hypothesis: that the mode of exploitation by the Dusuns is probable cause of the scarcity of the long stemmed, scandent palms in the regions easily accessible to the Dusuns.

I noticed in the lower regions between Tuaran & Dallas that the palms like the species of Arenga, Licuala, etc. also tend to become scarce not only owing to the above reason scarce owing to its restricted way in

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which the Dusuns defoliate them for the purpose of making roofs to their Sulaps (huts). Further observations are however necessary to ~~confirm~~ verify this hypothesis. The less populated areas lie apparently to eastern, northeastern & northwestern sides of the mount Kinabalu, so that a comparison of the vegetation of these regions with those already explored may throw ~~an~~ interesting further light on this problem.